

# Newsletter

MARCH-APRIL 2026



## President's Message

I am writing this as we move out of the deep freeze of January; by the time you read this, spring should be approaching or perhaps even here. If so, and you're itching to get outdoors, read about spring nature walks in mid-Iowa in this issue.

Because of the winter weather, our two most recent lectures were offered on Zoom. In January, we joined with OLLI to learn about activities at the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab including research on avian flu. A list of takeaways from their presentation appears in this newsletter. In February, we heard about travel in the Brazilian Amazon.

As we continue to plan our programming, we have finalized two talks in March and April. The first, by extension specialist Lynne Campbell, will focus on monarch conservation; the second will feature Paul Lasley, a retired professor in sociology and criminal justice, who refurbishes violins. More about both talks can be found below.

Just over the horizon is our annual Memorial Day program. It will be held on Wednesday, May 20 at 9 a.m. CT, in the ISU Alumni Center and on Zoom.

We were pleased to receive many responses to the survey you all received several months ago. We will soon be analyzing the results; this will help us plan the future of our organization.

I must end on a sad note. Diana Shonrock, a member of our board, passed away in late January. In her honor, an article in this issue features Diana's work at Parks Library, particularly the cookbook collection she curated. We extend our condolences to her family and friends.

**All the best,**  
*Barbara Pleasants, ISU Retirees Association President*

# Memorial Day Observance Set for May 20

The ISU Retirees Association is honored to once again host a Memorial Day ceremony to remember ISU retirees, current faculty and staff, and their spouses or partners who have passed away in recent months. If you are aware of someone who should be included in this remembrance, please contact Heather Bristow, Director of the ISU Retirees Association, at hbristow@iastate.edu or 515-294-5790.

During the ceremony, the names of those being remembered will be read, followed by an opportunity for family members and friends to share brief tributes if they wish. Invitations will be sent to a designated family member for each individual being honored, and they are encouraged to invite others who may want to attend.

This year's ceremony will take place on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. CT, both in person at the ISU Alumni Center and online via Zoom.

The ISU Retirees Association extends its sincere appreciation to Green Hills for sponsoring the Memorial Day Ceremony, and to the ISU Horticulture Club, the ISU Alumni Center event staff, and the Memorial Day Committee for their support in planning this year's event.



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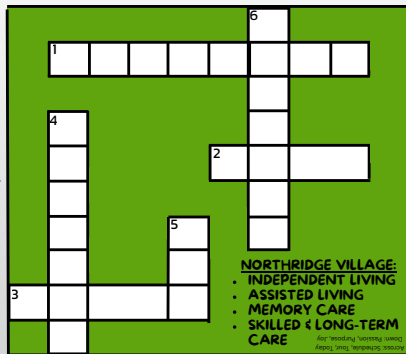
**ACROSS:**

- 1. PUT A VISIT ON YOUR CALENDAR
- 2. A GUIDED WALK THROUGH
- 3. NOT TOMORROW, NOT YESTERDAY, BUT...

**DOWN:**

- 4. A STRONG FEELING OF EXCITEMENT
- 5. THE REASON TO GET UP EACH DAY
- 6. THE FEELING OF PURE HAPPINESS.

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# Upcoming Talks: Monarchs and Fiddles

## Let's Get Connected: Monarch Conservation and More!



Speaker: Lynne Campbell

Thursday, March 26, 2026, 3-4 p.m. CT

Followed by a 30-minute social time

Online with Zoom. The link to attend is on the events page of the ISU Retirees website at <https://olli.iastate.edu/isu-retirees-association/>.

The Let's Get Connected project aims to expand community engagement through local partnerships to support implementation of the Iowa Monarch Conservation Consortium (IMCC) Strategy. AmeriCorps members around the state will continue to support the impactful Iowa DNR REAP Monarch Eggs Project by emphasizing IMCC graduate research to help youth and community members understand the urgency of monarch conservation efforts, especially adding habitat with milkweed and native nectar plants. Through collaborations with public libraries, K-12 schools, civic leaders, and community groups, new programming includes citizen science partnerships such as Mayors for Monarchs, Monarch Zones, Miles for Monarchs, and Symbolic Migration. Learn how ISU retirees can help support monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

**Lynne Campbell** began her Iowa State journey as a student athlete and letterwinner in softball. After earning degrees from Mount Mercy University and Drake, she taught middle school science and biology before becoming a STEM Extension Education Specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach. Her grant-supported programs engaged youth and adults in learning about agriculture and conservation, especially monarchs. She led grants including the Iowa DNR Monarch Eggs Project, developed Milkweed Planting Kits with the ISU Seed Science Center, and led development of several National 4 H Council programs. Lynne's work has earned numerous honors, including Fulbright Teacher Exchange to Japan, Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award, 2025 International Monarch Symposium presentation, and Natural Habitat Adventures' Kingdom of the Monarchs leadership experience for teachers in Mexico.

## Breathing New Life into Old Fiddles



Speaker: Paul Lasley

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 3-4 p.m.

Followed by a 30-minute social time

In-person only: Green Hills Community Room, 2205 Green Hills Dr, Ames, IA

Music has always been a major part of **Paul Lasley's** life, so in retirement he started taking fiddle lessons. This led to acquiring old fiddles from flea markets, antique malls, pawn shops, and garage sales, fixing them up, and donating them to the C.Y. Stephens instrument drive. This drive provides all types of musical instruments to grade school and middle school youth across central Iowa. Restoring violins combines Paul's woodworking skills and his interest in music to help support public school orchestras.

An emeritus professor of sociology and criminal justice, Paul earned a B.S. in animal husbandry and an M.S. and Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Missouri. He came to Iowa State in 1981 as an extension rural sociologist and remained for 40 years, retiring in 2021. He received the Iowa Master Farmer Association's Exceptional Service Award in 2023.

## Cookbooks and Computers: The Legacy of Diana Shonrock



*This article celebrates the life and work of Diana Shonrock, a lifelong learner and teacher who was frequently an instructor as well as a student in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Iowa State. Diana was the OLLI liaison on the ISU Retirees Association Board until she passed away in January at the age of 78. An early user of technology in teaching and learning, she leaves a legacy that will have a lasting impact on Parks Library and on Iowa State.*

**D**iana Shonrock worked in what was then Iowa State's library for more than 40 years, beginning in her undergraduate days when a student job there paid a handsome \$1 per hour. The first in her family to attend college, she earned a B.S. in what was then the College of Home Economics. After graduation, Diana began teaching Library 160, Iowa State's required course in library instruction.

Each academic quarter, Diana both taught Lib 160 and took a graduate course toward her M.S. in family environment/housing, which she received in 1975. Soon, Diana was teaching not only Lib 160 but also other Lib 160 instructors, becoming a mentor to many. In 1992, she received an M.L.S. (master of library science) from Iowa, which opened up new professional possibilities. As Head of General Reference and Coordinator of Staff Training she ensured that the Reference and Instruction staff received training on various topics and resources; she later worked as subject librarian and liaison to what was then the College of Human Sciences. She also became active in the American Library Association, particularly in the areas of reference and user services.

Any career straddling the 20th and 21st centuries was bound to include technology, and Diana was an early adopter. In 1978, she worked on a series of videotapes for Lib 160, and the following years saw her working with databases, running workshops for teachers on how to use the internet, and pioneering other instructional methods. She also collaborated in the 1990s with colleagues at Cornell University on digitizing a collection of books and journals in home economics.

Books, journals, and pamphlets on food and cooking are significant sources of information about human nutrition, community values, and family and social life through history, and certainly worth preserving. Thus, in 1992, a single phone call changed the arc of Diana's career. The caller was Robert Smith, a retired Army cook who wanted to give the library his collection of some 12,000 items related to cooking, including about 1,000 cookbooks. Smith's gift, along with donations of community-based cookbooks from across Iowa, offered an opportunity to build a major collection focused on cooking in the state. Organizing and curating these donations became a major part of Diana's work for the rest of her career.

It's at the intersection of cookbooks and computing that we find a fascinating part of Diana's legacy. Eager to learn about cookbooks elsewhere in Iowa, she built a database of cookbooks in libraries all over the state. She co-created a website, the [Iowa Cookbook Collection](#), which was later [expanded](#) by the library's Special Collections and Archives staff. That version added details, solicited further donations, and included a feature on Iowa State's [cherry pie tradition](#). It also contained some digital resources – scanned cookbooks and copies of Kitchen Klatter magazine (no longer available at this URL, but [elsewhere online](#).)

The latest step in digitizing the Cookbook Collection was proposed by Erin Ridnour, a digital scholarship librarian at Parks. She selected about 200 cookbooks from the collection – roughly 60,000 pages – to be scanned as image files, then re-scanned to create searchable text. A team of specialists worked together to find and assess the books, scan and re-scan them, create metadata (information about the digitized books), and bring everything together. The result of their work is a [new Cookbook Collection](#) which opens new ways of examining recipes and cooking practices. It's now easy to find, for example, how many of these 200 books mention *lefse*, or how often *lemon* appears close to *jello*.

Erin uses this new, rich resource both for her own research and for teaching in the library's Summer Institute of Digital Inquiry, an intensive workshop for graduate students on digital tools and methods of analysis. Her work is online in a project blog, [Computers Reading Cookbooks](#) that shows how textual data can be organized and visualized.

According to Erin, it was Diana's devotion to the Iowa Cookbook Collection that makes her own work possible today. As the collection's steward, Diana curated and made accessible a vast new resource for teaching and learning. "She planted the seed," says Erin. "We could not do this without her."

*Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor*

*Photo courtesy of the Shonrock family*

## Touch Grass (and View Flowers)

The kids saying “touch grass” is vaguely insulting. But really, it’s a great idea. What could be better than getting outside, touching grass (with your shoes, anyway), and taking in the beauty of spring? Here are some opportunities to do so in central Iowa.

The Outdoor Alliance of Story County hosts three spring wildflower walks in April and May, all on **Thursdays from 1:30-3 p.m.** Led by Alliance members, these walks are co-sponsored by Story County Conservation. All are free, and no registration is required. More information is available on the [Spring Wildflower Walks](#) webpage.

- **Thursday, April 23, Reactor Woods:** Meet at 2098 Scholl Rd. off Ontario, in the parking lot.
- **Thursday, April 30, Robison Wildlife Area:** Meet at 29490 632nd Ave., Maxwell, in the parking lot.
- **Thursday, May 7, Soper’s Mill:** Meet in the parking area on the northeast side of the South Skunk River at 56364 170th St., Ames (the side closest to the interstate).

Or, you could take a springtime Forest Bathing Walk at Reiman Gardens on **Sunday, April 26 from 1-3 p.m.** Brandy Case Haub, trained in guiding nature therapy experiences, will lead a slow, meditative walk which covers less than half a mile, helping participants enter a state of “embodied awareness.” The cost is \$35 for members, \$47 for the general public, which includes admission to Reiman Gardens. Participants must register and complete a liability waiver (available at the front desk). You can learn more on the [events page](#) of Reiman Garden’s website. Another session, to be held Thursday, July 16, from 8-10 a.m., is designed specifically for those 55 and older.

Why not let your dog touch some grass as well? Reiman Gardens will once again offer “Rovers at Reiman” each Tuesday in April from 4:30-8 p.m. Dogs must be leashed and be up-to-date on shots. Registration is encouraged, and the cost is \$5 per dog in addition to gardens admission.

If you live a bit south of Ames, ISU Polk County Extension and Polk County Conservation offer a “Wake Up With Spring” walking series. The walks will be held on **Wednesdays in April from 2-3:30 p.m.** beginning at Jester Park’s Wetland Shelter. Each week’s walk has a specific theme.

- **Wednesday, April 1** – Phenology (the study of recurring cyclical events such as leaf emergence and bird migration)
- **Wednesday, April 8** – Birds
- **Wednesday, April 15** – Spring Ephemerals (among the first plants to emerge in spring)
- **Wednesday, April 22** – Critters
- **Wednesday, April 29** – Trees

There is no cost, and registration is not required, but an RSVP is appreciated. For more information, including about accessibility, and to send an RSVP, [visit the Polk County Conservation website](#).

Moved away? That’s okay – retirees everywhere can find similar walks by searching online for “2026 spring flower walks” and their town or county.

*Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor*

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## Shaping the Future Together: Retirees Association Updates

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Engagement Survey distributed in December 2025. Your feedback is incredibly valuable and will help guide the Retirees Association Board of Directors and staff as we continue navigating our transition back to the university. We appreciate your time, your insights, and your commitment to shaping the future of the ISU Retirees Association.

Please watch for future updates as we explore new opportunities and possibilities for serving the ISU retiree community.

# 10 Things to Know About High-Pathology Bird Flu



Photo credit: Freepik

On Jan. 23, the Retirees Association and OLLI welcomed Rodger Main, director of the ISU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL), and his faculty colleagues Drew Magstadt and Yuko Sato for a discussion of “From Avian Influenza to Innovation: Updates from the ISU VDL.” Their presentation touched on the history of the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, its new state-of-the-art building, and ongoing research on high-pathology avian influenza (HPAI) on dairy farms, poultry operations, and in the wild. Here are ten points of interest from their talk.

1. The VDL, the largest food animal-centered diagnostic lab in North America if not the world, conducts more than 1.7 million tests per year.
2. In 2024, its staff was instrumental in quickly diagnosing an outbreak of HPAI in dairy cattle. Cows’ mammary glands, in particular, are sites of effective multiplication of the virus.
3. The dairy cattle outbreak spread across many states because the infected cows showed no symptoms for two weeks, and many were moved between dairy operations during that latent period.
4. HPAI is present in many animal species, even polar bears. But mortality rates differ widely across species. It is fatal to poultry – the “high pathology” of HPAI refers to the disease’s effect on chickens – but some wild birds and other animals can tolerate the virus.
5. In Iowa, this strain of HPAI has been detected in poultry since 2022.
6. At a recent peak of HPAI in poultry, the VDL analyzed samples in three tranches per day, with a turnaround time of just a few hours.
7. Food security standards can be improved through commonsense measures, for example workers changing clothes when they come on duty.
8. Vaccination of poultry and dairy cows is possible but would raise economic and political problems, as some countries would refuse to import food animals which had been vaccinated.
9. The risk to the public from HPAI is low, but there has been animal-to-human transmission of the virus. Pasteurized milk and properly cooked eggs and poultry are completely free of the virus.
10. The public should avoid contact with dead or injured birds and report sightings to the Department of Natural Resources.

*Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor*



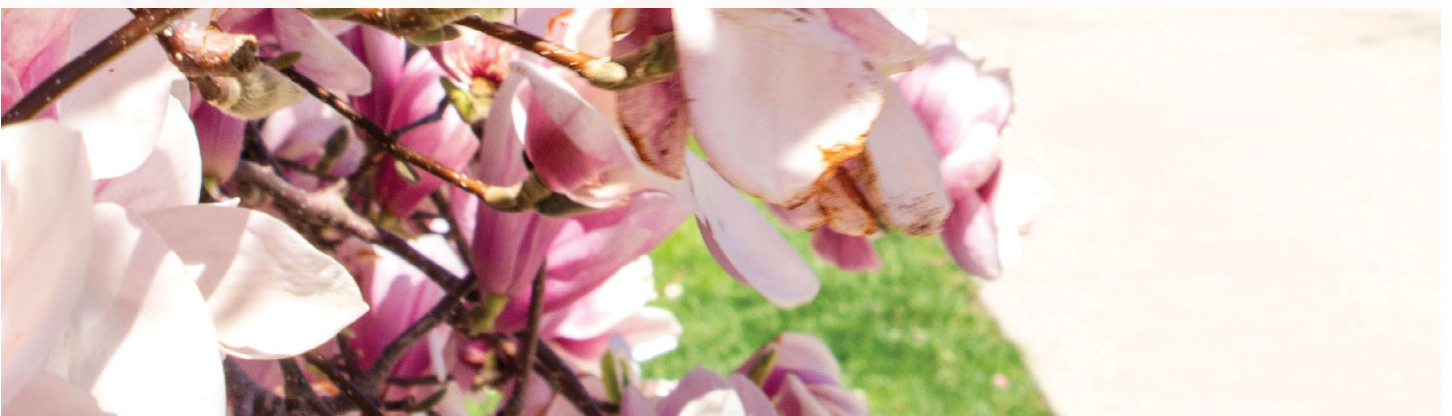
# Congratulations, New Retirees!

James Ball  
Diane Birt  
Lori Bousson  
Dale Brown  
Lori Bushore  
Lisa Chizek  
Steven Constance  
Diane Davis  
Joan Dodd  
Stephanie Downs  
Alan Eggenberger  
Brenda Emery  
Margaret Evans

Sharron Evans  
Philip Gassman  
Joel Geske  
Timothy Gleason  
Jane Hahn  
Jon Heacock  
Jane Houk  
Nora Hudson  
Terry Janssen  
Deb Jennings  
Curtis Johnson  
Duane Johnson  
Christopher Lee

Julie Lelonek  
Blanca Lopez-Jarnagin  
Tammy Michel  
Steven Mickelson  
Kyung Min  
Kelly Netcott  
Renee Novak  
Angela Powers  
Susan Roos-Rickels  
Wendie Schneider  
Jeff Schreck  
Jerry Schumacher  
Karen Scoggin

Mark Sebring  
Debra Sellers  
Jan Shearer  
Fran Sobotka  
Anna Spickler  
Arne Swanson  
Mary Weinand  
William Wing  
Wendy Wintersteen  
Meimei Xu  
Reza Zoughi



## What's Going On Over There?

*This feature highlights people, places, and events of interest to retirees who haven't been "over" to campus lately, whether you're a mile or a thousand miles away.*

# SHOP Food Pantry Fills Student Needs

Finding a meal at Iowa State is easy. They're available in dining centers, food courts, cafes, and elsewhere on campus. Yet many students who struggle to make ends meet can't readily afford these options. For them the SHOP (Students Helping Our Peers) food pantry fills a real need.

The SHOP is a neat, organized place on the lower level of Beyer Hall. In one room, freezers and refrigerators store perishable items, while counters and tables provide space for staples and canned goods, eggs, and fresh fruits and vegetables. In the other, recipes, food storage and preparation tips are available from ISU Extension.

Open to all students, graduate and undergraduate, the SHOP was begun in the fall 2010 semester by a learning community of transfer students in Food Science and Human Nutrition. Since then, the SHOP has grown substantially, and while technically still a student club, it also collaborates with Student Health and Wellness, part of the Division of Student Affairs. Through this collaboration, the SHOP partners with the Food Bank of Iowa and organizations such as the ISU Poultry Farm and the USDA. It also benefits from student food drives at Homecoming in the fall semester and Greek Week in the spring. The result is a complex system of purchases, donations and distributions that serves more than 500 students per week.

If that number seems surprising, consider: while roughly a tenth of the general population faces food insecurity – defined as a need to reduce the quality, variety, and in some instances the quantity of one's food – food insecurity affects more than one third of university students. For that reason, although the SHOP's busiest time of year is the first few weeks of fall semester, its services are always in high demand.

ISU retirees and Ames residents can support the SHOP in a variety of ways. One is simply by talking about it – raising awareness of the SHOP on campus and in the community lets students know about the service and helps "de-stigmatize" the use of food pantries. Another way to help is through Reiman Gardens' Grow and Give program, formerly known as Plant a Row. Through Grow and Give, home gardeners plant extra vegetables, fruits, or herbs and drop off their produce at Reiman Gardens, which distributes it to local organizations including the SHOP.

Donations of many kinds are always welcome. Especially in demand are plastic shopping bags and 12-count egg cartons of any material, cut in half, to facilitate distribution of 60 dozen eggs per week. Direct donations of food are also welcome, but the way to optimize food donation is financially, as the SHOP can purchase food from the Food Bank of Iowa and other venues at greatly reduced prices. Donations can be made to the SHOP through its ISU Foundation account, the [ISU Food Pantry Support Fund](#).

*Photos courtesy of SHOP*

*Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor*





# OLLI

| at |

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

# UPDATE!

OLLI at Iowa State continues its transition into the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), and one of the most visible steps is the debut of its new logo featured above. With more than 400 members already this year, the program is looking ahead with energy and optimism as it expands lifelong learning opportunities for the community.

In March, OLLI will host a Speed-Friending event at Green Hills—a fun and relaxed opportunity to connect with others through brief conversations as participants rotate around the room. In addition, First Friday Coffee gatherings are now offered year-round, both in person and online. You do not need to be an OLLI member to participate in either of these events, so be sure to visit the [events page](#) for details.

March also brings excitement with the introduction of the Spring 2026 OLLI courses. Please join us via Zoom on Wednesday, March 4, at 1:30 p.m. CT for the Course Preview event. Instructors will share brief, 90-second overviews of their upcoming classes. A selection of course titles is listed below, and with more than 40 courses and field trips available, there is truly something for everyone. We invite you to explore the [Course Information page](#) on the OLLI website to learn more.

- Authentic Italian Cooking: The Spring Kitchen, Instructor: Phyllis Lyte
- Finding Your Rhythm with Drumming, Instructor: Karen Bates
- George Washington: First in the Hearts of His Countrymen, Instructor: Jane Cox
- Idioms and Other Oddities of the English Language, Instructor: Beth Larabee
- ISU Creamery Butter Workshop, Instructor: Christina Jackson
- Life on the “Home Front” in the 1940s, Instructor: Chuck Achter
- Learn to Play Pickleball, Instructors: Ames Pickleball Club
- Lost and Found: How to Keep Your Muscles from Going Missing, Instructor: Sarah Francis
- Midwest Wine Production, Instructor: Erin Norton
- Overview of Contemporary Astronomy, Instructor: Sam Wormley
- Retirement Income Planning: Strategies to Help Preserve Your Savings, Instructor: Ben Geiger
- Thinking with AI, Instructor: Joseph Nalven

To participate in OLLI course offerings, a current OLLI at Iowa State membership is required. Membership is just \$35 and is valid through June 30 each year. In addition to access to lifelong learning courses and social events, members also enjoy the following benefits:

- Connection to a community of enthusiastic learners
- Access to quality non-credit educational opportunities (priced separately)
- Nine OLLI Talk programs with no cost or registration (\$225 value)
- Monthly newsletter
- Weekly Friday emails during class sessions about the next week’s activities
- Ames Chamber Artists complimentary pair of concert tickets (\$30 value)
- Central Iowa Symphony complimentary pair of concert tickets (\$40 value)
- ISU Library card for use at Parks Library for \$5 (non-ISU retiree, Iowa residents only) (\$15 value)
- Octagon Center for the Arts 10% discount on a purchase of \$25 or more
- Stephens Auditorium Buy One/Get One ticket offers to select shows

*Submitted by Heather Bristow, Director, OLLI and ISU Retirees Association*

*OLLI, a lifelong learning program, was developed by the ISU Retirees Association in 1993 and later was invited to become an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Today, OLLI at Iowa State is one of 124 programs at colleges and universities from Maine to Alaska to Hawaii that are partially sponsored by the Bernard Osher Foundation.*

## 2025-26 Board of Directors

**T**he ISU Retirees Association (ISURA) board of directors is an official university committee. Representatives from each college, the University Library, Extension, merit staff, professional and scientific staff, and the University Benefits Committee are appointed to serve on this committee. Other committee members include a Faculty Senate representative and the ISURA newsletter editor.

**Barbara Pleasants** (LAS): President  
**Scott Elston** (Business): Past President  
**Jan Breitman** (P&S): Secretary  
**Susan Yager**: Newsletter Editor

**Mary Lynn Damhorst** (Human Sciences)  
**Norman Hill** (University Benefits liaison)  
**Jane Jacobson** (LAS)  
**Pat Strah** (P&S)  
**Florine Swanson** (Extension)  
**Max Porter** (Faculty Senate liaison)

**Ex Officio**  
**Heather Bristow**, ISU Retirees Director

## Office Hours and Contact Information

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. • <https://olli.iastate.edu/isu-retirees-association/>

Heather Bristow, *Director*  
[hbristow@iastate.edu](mailto:hbristow@iastate.edu)  
(515) 294-5790

## Contact Information Updates



Be sure to send us your most current contact information so we can keep you up-to-date on the latest news and events for ISU Retirees. You may access the information form online at <https://olli.iastate.edu/isu-retirees-association/> or by using this QR code.